May 26, 2005
Press Office: 860-240-8700

House Approves Workers` Comp Benefits for National Guard Soldiers

Legislation Sponsored By Rep. Bielawa

HARTFORD - The House of Representatives today approved legislation cosponsored by State Representative Hank Bielawa (R-2nd) that would provide workers' compensation benefits for members of the Connecticut National Guard called to active duty by the Governor. House Bill 6565 now goes before the State Senate for consideration.

Under current law, state armed forces personnel, including Connecticut National Guard members, injured while on duty under state orders can file a claim in the Military Department under the authority of the adjutant general. When injured while they are on federal orders, Connecticut Guardsmen would receive federal compensation.

This bill repeals the Military Department's authority to consider claims, make or deny compensation awards, and set compensation amounts. It places state armed forces personnel under the preferred state workers' compensation system when they are on state orders.

By law, "state armed forces personnel" is defined as the Connecticut National Guard, the state militia including the Marine Corps branch, and the organized militia, which includes the Governor's Foot Guards and the Governor's Horse Guards.

The bill requires that any member of the state armed forces who is under orders and is injured or contracts a disease when on duty or assembled for duty must receive benefits in accordance with the state Workers' Compensation Act. It applies to any injury or disease that causes temporary or permanent disability that prevents the person from performing his usual duties or occupation.

"Whenever they are called up by the Governor, the men and women serving in the Connecticut National Guard place themselves at risk to serve the people of our state," said Rep. Bielawa. "If they are injured in the line of duty, we should do all we can to provide them the best care possible."